



Lawn Conversion & Green Infrastructure

WHAT, WHY, AND HOW?

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pennsylvania environmental council

WWW.PECPA.ORG



PEC protects and restores the natural and built environments through innovation, collaboration, education and advocacy.

Agenda for Today

Incorporating Meadows Into Human-Built Environment

Typical Issues

- Aesthetics & Safety Concerns
- Maintenance
- Local Ordinances

Shifting Perspectives

- Communications
- Yard Certifications and Signage
- What EAC's Can Do



Incorporating Meadows Into Human-Built Environment

Urban / Suburban

- Shrink residential lawns
- Diversify large landowner landscaping
- Address limitations (setbacks and aesthetics)

Suburban/Rural

- Protect and conserve existing meadows
- Restore with native vegetation
- Conversion of larger residential and institutional properties to meadows

Manage for natural diversity

- Meadows
- Shrubs, trees, woodlands



Backyard meadow



Natural Lands meadow

Lawn to Meadow Conversions

SMALLER SCALE



Lawn to Meadow Conversions

LARGER SCALE



Typical Issues

Aesthetics / Expectations

- Degrees of wild
- Cues to care
- Safety concerns

Maintenance

- Public Works & Parks
- Homeowners and Volunteers
- Landscaping contractors

Local Ordinances

- Weed and Nuisance Ordinances
- Meadows may be allowed (with restrictions)
- Working with municipal staff/code enforcement

Aesthetics and Expectations

- Neat/tidy means care
- Concerns about wildness (looks messy)



Degrees of Wildness



Five alternative front yard



Conventional Front Yard Design



50% Native Garden Front Yard Design



75% Native Garden Front Yard Design



Mature Trees Front Yard Design



Young Trees Front Yard Design

Cues to Care

JOAN NASSAUER, UNIVERISTY OF MICHIGAN

- Show natural landscaping is being cared for (e.g., half turf grass/half meadow)
- Emphasize colorful native flowers
- Knowledge of native species will increase acceptance of their use
- People conditioned by what their neighbors do
- Individual outreach good but work for change at community level

Cues to Care

*Mowed edges
and fences*

*Flowering
plants and
trees*

Wildlife
feeders and
houses

Bold patterns

*Trimmed
Shrubs*

Signs



Address Safety Concerns

- Pollen (Rag Weed/not Golden Rod)
- Know and remove noxious weeds
- Discuss pests and fire hazard concerns



Rag Weed

Golden Rod

Maintenance



Maintenance

- Still mowing!
 - 1-2 times a year at first
 - After this, once a year
- Control invasive species
- Equipment needs
 - Mower that cuts no lower than 6 inches
- Several years to establish

Municipal Public Works and Parks



Staff buy in and train



ID native and remove invasive plants



Timing of maintenance mowing



Education and outreach continues

Homeowners and Volunteers Work with Watershed Organizations/EACs

Internal Expertise

Identifying and removing invasive plants

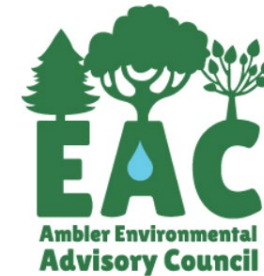
Mowing recommendations

Access to special equipment



Homeowner Stormwater Management Programs

- Ambler 100 Rain Gardens Campaign
- Haverford Hava-Rain-Garden
- Abington Rain Barrel the Town
- Stream Smart House Call Program
- Rain Check



Haverford EAC:

PHILADELPHIA
WATER
— DEPARTMENT —



Stream Smart House Call Program



- Mix of home/volunteer and professional landscaper work force
- Key Priority – Grow homeowner-scale professional landscaper capacity - naturalization practices
- Contractors identified for local projects; but pool of these specialists is small.



Local Ordinances



Weed Ordinances – Montgomery County PA



Exceptions for wildflower meadows & stream buffers, but location of meadow is restricted (set-backs of 50' from street, 25' from structure/neighbor).



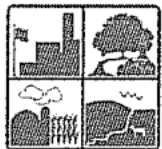
Exceptions for meadows, stream buffers, stormwater features...as long as no noxious weeds.



Township of
FERGUSON
Pennsylvania

Ordinance 10-103-105 - Managed Natural Landscapes

- Recognizes benefits
- Calls out potential impacts
 - Property values
 - Human health or safety
 - Threat to agricultural activity
- Provides definitions (e.g., managed natural area)
- Requires landowner to register natural landscape, manage noxious weeds, and provide plan (size, species, O/M)



APPLICATION TO REGISTER MANAGED NATURAL LANDSCAPES
Ferguson Township, Centre County

City of Salisbury, Maryland Ordinance

POCKET POLLINATOR MEADOWS



CITY LAUNCHES POCKET POLLINATOR MEADOW PROGRAM

**Register on City's Housing and Community
Development Department website**

Managed so that:

- Not stagnant or weed infested; *no noxious weeds*
- Majority of plants native to Maryland
- Cut to no more than 8 inches once between September 15th and March 15th
- 10 feet or more away from front property line
- 5 feet from side and/or rear property line (or fully opaque fence, at least 5 feet high)



York County PA Sustainable Landscape Ordinance

- 2014 model ordinance
- Common areas - larger residential developments, commercial /industrial subdivisions, and land developments
- Not for individual residential lots/small subdivisions
- Requires landscaping plan

York County, PA Sustainable Landscape Ordinance

- Stockpile/re-distribution topsoil
- Source native trees, shrubs, and perennial species within 250 miles
- Use meadow plants in place of ground cover or turf
- Minimum 4-foot turf border along road/property line (or 4-foot visual barrier)
- Twice a year mowing (March/April and later to control invasives)



York County, PA Sustainable Landscape Ordinance

LESSONS LEARNED

Changing Landscape Practices Implications for Landowners and Local Officials: 10.12.21

Model Ordinance Filter

- Is the subject timely?
- Is the topic easily understood?
- Are explanations provided?
- How do you expect this topic to be received locally?
- How many municipalities can potentially benefit from this ordinance language?

**Kurt Leitholf, Chief of Municipal Planning,
York County Planning Commission**

PSU webinar *Changing Landscape
Practices Implications for Landowners and
Local Officials: 10.12.21*

Is model ordinance timely?

- Easily understood? Explainable?

Enforceable?

- ID Local supporters?

What is controversial? Change in Aesthetics? Pest Concerns?

- As level of understanding increases, more sustainable landscaping occurs
- Takes time, develop relationships with municipalities

Summary of Ordinance Requirements

- Set-backs
- Design plan
- Register with municipality
- Native plants
- Exempt Managed Natural Landscapes from the “Public Nuisance” property code
- 1-2 mows/year

**Adams County
Municipal Nuisance Ordinances
Those Involving Cutting of Vegetation**

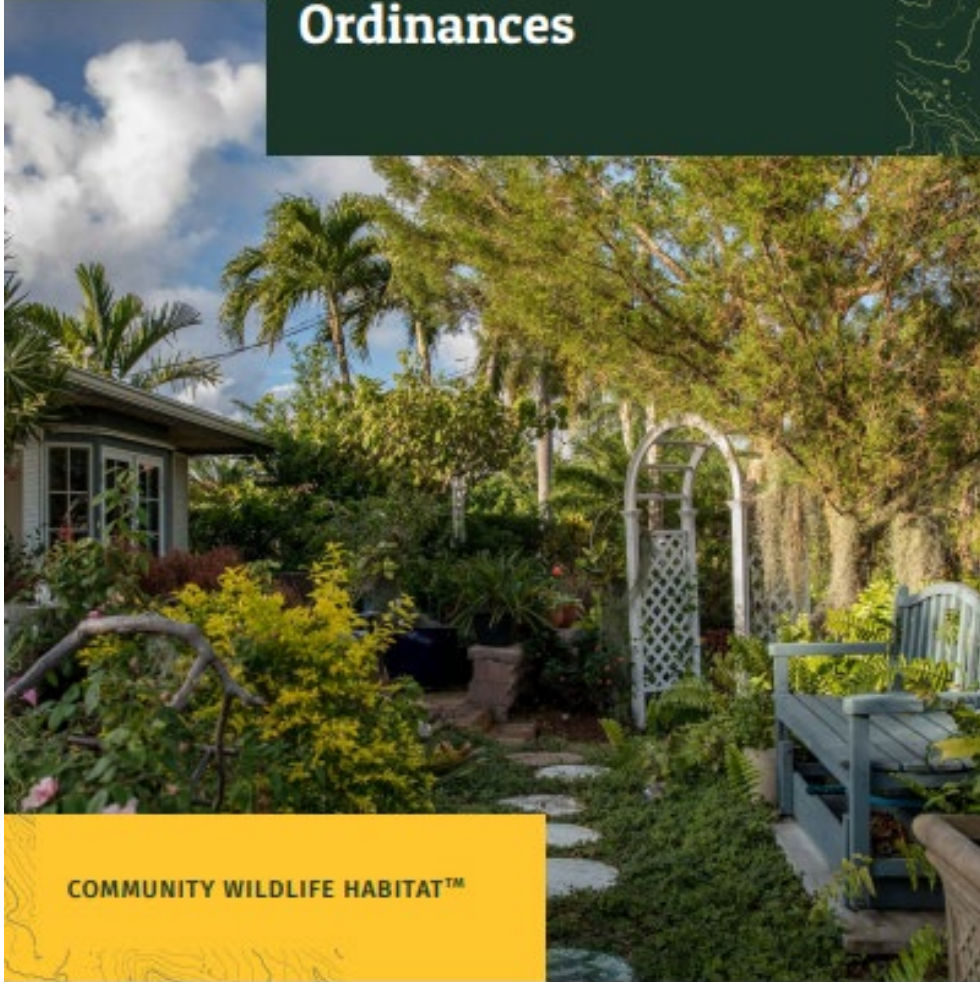
ORDINANCE NO. 368

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD, BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE PROVISIONS OF THE LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP CODE RELATED TO SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE FOR THE USE OF NATIVE PLANTS

Ordinance 10-103-105 - Managed Natural Landscapes



Guide to Passing Wildlife-Friendly Property Maintenance Ordinances



COMMUNITY WILDLIFE HABITAT™

Helpful Resource

- Promotes expansion of wildlife-friendly habitats in communities
- Case study examples
- Recommended Policy Solutions

“Transform local landscaping practices and you can empower any individual or organization to participate in the expansion of wildlife friendly habitat where they live, work, play and worship.”

[Guide Link](#)

Shifting Perceptions

Increase number of
meadows

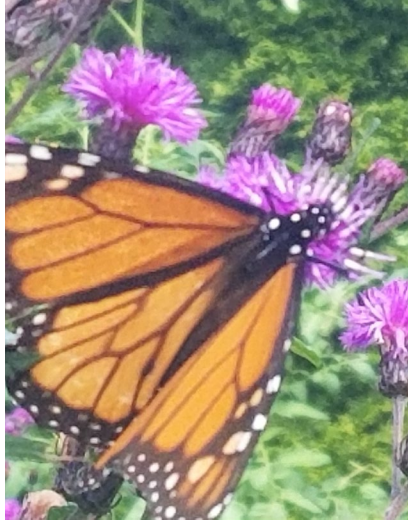


Advertise when
successful



Goal: People
recognize and
appreciate meadows



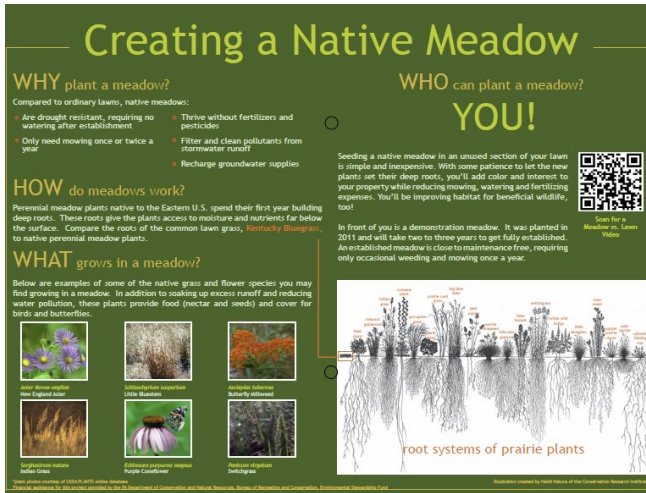


How Municipalities and Communities Benefit

- Municipalities:
 - Reduce mowing costs
 - Improve stormwater management
 - MS4 credit – tie meadow to basins/volume retention
 - Improved park/natural land aesthetics and habitat
- Communities:
 - Inviting space close to home
 - Health benefits
 - Attract birds and butterflies
 - Cost savings in long term
 - Water quality benefits
 - Contribution to greater natural landscape

Communicating with Neighbors and Stakeholders

- Cues to Care
- Communication with neighbors
 - Word of mouth
 - Social Media
 - Educational brochures
- Backyard programs and trainings
 - Building stewardship communities
- Demonstration Sites
- Signs



STAY CONNECTED



<https://pecpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Water-Resources-How-to-Create-a-Meadow.pdf>

Yard Certification Programs



Yard Certification Programs

[Watershed Friendly Property Certification Program – PSU/Master Watershed Stewards/The Nurture Nature Center](#)

[National Wildlife Federation - Certified Wildlife Habitat](#)

[Audubon - Bird-Friendly Habitat](#)

[Homegrown National Park – Doug Tallamy](#)

[Monarch Watch – Monarch Waystations](#)

[Pollinator Garden Certification - PSU](#)



What can EAC's Do?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ADDRESS ISSUES & CONCERNS?

- Aesthetics – Education, Tours of sites
- Talk to Code Enforcement officer
- Review & understand local weed ordinances
- Educate residents and officials about misinformation regarding naturalized areas
- Promote proper maintenance on private property
- Promote training of municipal parks staff

Thank you!

ANY QUESTIONS?



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